

**SPINY LOBSTER FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE GULF OF
MEXICO AND SOUTH ATLANTIC
AMENDMENT 11**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
*JULY 2012***

What change to spiny lobster management is included in Amendment 11?

- Lobster trap fishing is prohibited in 60 areas covering 5.9 mi² of federal waters off the Florida Keys beginning August 27, 2012.

Why will lobster trap fishing be prohibited?

- NOAA Fisheries Service determined if lobster traps are moved by storms or accidentally placed on corals they could damage coral.
- Elkhorn and staghorn corals are threatened species.
- Protection of known colonies of these coral species will help populations to recover.

How were the closed areas determined?

- Staff from NOAA Fisheries Service and the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils worked with fishermen, scientists, and managers to choose areas that would protect the most coral without overly restricting fishing.
- The group considered six factors when choosing the areas:
 - Protect all known elkhorn coral because of their relative rarity in the Florida Keys;
 - Protect areas where elkhorn and staghorn corals co-occur;
 - Distribute areas throughout the Florida Keys (to the greatest extent practicable);
 - Select areas that not only protect elkhorn and staghorn coral, but may also protect seven species of corals currently proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act;
 - Include coral nurseries, if possible;
 - Protect the largest colonies with the greatest ability to reproduce.

Where can I see the closed areas?

- Maps can be viewed at:
http://www.gulfcouncil.org/resources/Spiny/Spiny_Maps.php.
- Coordinates can be viewed at:
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/SpinyLobsterClosedAreaCoordinates.pdf>.

What else is in Amendment 11?

- The Councils considered requiring trap line markings for lobster traps, but chose to take no action at this time.
- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is conducting a study to determine which marking methods would work best for lobster trap lines.

- Trap line marking requirements would allow NOAA Fisheries to better identify fishery impacts on protected species, leading to more targeted measures to reduce those impacts.
- The Councils intend to revisit this issue when the study is complete.